

ON THE SLAVS AND THE ANTIANS

The first half of the 6th century

From The History of the Wars by Procopius Caesariensis¹

These people, the Slavs² and the Antiants³, are not governed by one man, but from the beginning live in democracy⁴, and that is why during their meetings both favourable and unfavourable public affairs were discussed. The same applies to both sides, most matters for these barbarians were adopted as customs from the old times. Namely, they believe that one god, the creator of lightning, is the one and only master off all, and they dedicate the oxen and all other sacrificial animals to him⁵. They do not know of destiny⁶, nor do they believe otherwise that it has any kind of influence upon people, but when

¹ Procopius Caesariensis (the beginning of the VIth century c. 565 A. D.) is among the most famous Byzantine writers and historians of the VIth century. He was a contemporary of the Emperor Justinian I (527—565). Only a few extracts are given here from *The History of the Wars*, which speak of the Antiants and the Slavs, of their way of life, religion, their invasion of the Balkans, etc.

² Scholars are still engaged in lively polemics as to the origin and the original homeland of the Slavs. See B. B. Седов, *Происхождение и ранняя история славян*, Moscow 1979, p. 7 et seq.

³ The Antiants were the Slavs' closest neighbours. For further information about them see П. Н. Третьяков, *Восточнославянские племена*, Moscow 1953, p. 153 seq.

⁴ By the beginning of the 6th century, when the Slavs and the Antiants began crossing the Danube more frequently and razing and robbing the Byzantine property on the Balkans, their social development had reached its highest level of slave-holding relations, that is the phase known as military democracy.

⁵ The pagan Slavs also brought these rituals to Macedonia after their settlement. See Б. Панов, *Општествено-политичките прилики во Струмичката област, од крајот на VI до почетокот на X век.* — *Гласник на Институтот за национална историја*, Skopje, V/2 1961, p. 214.

⁶ About this and the development, and understanding of the destiny of the South Slavs see I. Grafenauer, *Slovensko-kajkavske bajke o Rojenicah-Sojenicah* *Etnolog* 17 (1944), p. 34 and *Византијски Извори за историју народа Југославије*, Том I, Belgrade, 1955, p. 27, note 26^a.

they are ill or when they are at war⁷, they give their word that if they are saved, they will make a sacrifice to the god for their souls, and if they have survived, they sacrifice what they have promised to, and believe that with this sacrifice they have attained their salvation. It is true that they respect rivers and nymphs⁸ and other deities⁹, and they make sacrifices to all of them and practise divination with the sacrifices¹⁰. They live in shabby cottages¹¹, scattered far away from each other, changing their place of habitation¹². When entering combat, most of them attack the enemy as foot soldiers carrying small shields and spears in their hands, but they never wear armour¹³. Some of them do not have a shirt or a cloak, and after pulling on their trousers to their waist they enter combat. Both have the same language¹⁴, totally barbarian¹⁵. They do not differ from each other in external appearance: all of them are tall and physically strong, and as for the colour of their skin and hair, they are not too fair or blonde, nor are they totally dark, but all of them are reddish¹⁶. They live harshly and in a state of neglect, like the Masagenians¹⁷ and like them they are always filthy, but as a whole they are not dishonest or malicious, and in their simplicity they retain the Hunnish nature. The name of the Slavs and Antians in the old times was even the same: both were called Spori¹⁸, since I believe that they settled the land sporadically. This is why they settled a spacious land, the larger part of the other bank of the Istar¹⁹. This is how it is with these people.

Procopii Caesariensis Opera omnia. Ed. J. Hauri. Lipsiae 1906, p. 357—359.

⁷ During the 7th century the Macedonian Slavs were still using diviners to predict the outcome of war. See B. Grafenauer, *Nekaj vprašanj iz dobe naseljavanja Južnih Slovanov*. — *Zgodovski časopis Ljubljana*, IV, 1950, p. 103.

⁸ Refers to the nymphs.

⁹ On the separate deities of the Slavs СП и ИВ. Дуйчев, *Рационалистички проблясъци в славянското средновековие*, Исторически преглед, Sofia, XIX/Б, 1962, p. 86 et seq.

¹⁰ For further information see Т. П. Вукановић, *Етногенеза Јужних словена*. — *Врањски Гласник* I/X, 1974 п. 51 et seq.

¹¹ The Slav settlements in this period were mainly half dugout shelters. Besides these, above-ground, low constructions made of clay and stone existed. See В. В. Седов, *Происхождение и ранняя история славян*, p. 55 et seq.

¹² In Procopius's report it is indirectly stated that the Slavs across the Danube in this period lived from quite primitive agriculture and cattle raising.

¹³ About the Slavs' weaponry and methods of combat see Т. П. Вукановић, *Етногенеза*, p. 41 et seq.

¹⁴ The Slav language belongs to the family of the Indo-European languages. See В. В. Седов, *Происхождение и ранняя история славян*, p. 18 et seq.

¹⁵ The Byzantines considered the Slav language as a "barbarian" language, even after the Slav settlement of Macedonia. See Б. Панов, *Теофилакт Охридски како извор за средновековната историја на македонскиот народ*, Skopje, 1971, p. 294 et seq.

¹⁶ About the anthropological characteristics of the Slavs see Т. П. Вукановић, *Етногенеза*, p. 34 et seq.

¹⁷ Refers to the Huns. See *Византијски Извори*, I, p. 29, note 35; p. 30, note 37.

¹⁸ With reference to the name Spori (Σπόροι) see L. Niderle, "Über die Σπόροι des Procopios". — *Archiv für slav. Philologie*, XXIII, 1901, pp. 130—133.

¹⁹ i. e. the Danube. From the end of the 5th century the River Danube became a natural border-line between Byzantium and the Slav world. See: Б.

THE SLAV ARMY CROSSES THE DANUBE

548 A. D.

From The History of the Wars by Procopius Caesariensis

During this period²⁰, the Slav army crossed the River Istar²¹ and committed great crimes against the Illyrian population up to Epidamn²², killing or capturing all adults and robbing them of their wealth. There they conquered many fortresses that up till then had been considered safe, for nobody defended them and they were free to invade and ransack everything. The Illyrian archons²³ followed them with an army of 15,000 men, but they never had the courage to approach the enemy.

*Procopii Caesariensis, p. 423.*ATTEMPTS OF THE SLAVS TO CONQUER SALONIKA
AND THE SURROUNDING CITIES

550—551 A. D.

From The History of the Wars by Procopius Caesariensis

In the Illyrian city of Serdika²⁴, while Germanus²⁵ was gathering and preparing the army for war, the Slavs invaded the Romeian land as never before²⁶. They crossed the River Istar²⁷ and reached the vicinity of Niš. While wandering individually in the surrounding places away from the camp a few solders were captured and questioned by

Панов, Охрид и Охридската област во првите векови по словенската колонизација (VI—VIII век). — Годишен Зборник на Филозофскиот факултет на Универзитетот во Скопје, кн. 4 (30), Скопје, 1978, p. 119 et seq..

²⁰ i. e. in 548 A. D.

²¹ The River Danube.

²² The city of Drač. On the frequent Slav attacks on the Balkans in this period see L. A. Гиндин, Начальные периоды славянизации Балкан как междудисциплинарная проблема, in Комплексные проблемы истории и культуры народов Центральной и юговосточной Европы, Институт славяноведения и балканистики АН СССР, Moscow, 1979, p. 35 et seq..

²³ These were the administrators of the separate provinces of the prefecture of Illyricum, which consisted of two dioceses from the end of the 4th century: Dacia and Macedonia. They in turn were divided into several provinces. Furthermore, Salonika was the capital city of the province of Illyricum. See Г. Острогорски, Историја Византије, Belgrade, 1969, pp. 55—56; also cf. Ф. Папазоглу, Македонски градови у римско доба, Skopje, 1957, p. 87 et seq.

²⁴ Serdika, present-day Sofia was also called Triadica and Sredecus in the Middle — Ages.

²⁵ Germanus, Byzantine general during the reign of Justinian I.

²⁶ On the basis of this report the penetration of the Slavs dates from the year 550 (Византијски извори, I, p. 45, note 88).

²⁷ i. e. the Danube.

some Romeians, who were interested in the Slav army and with what intention it crossed the River Istar. The soldiers stated that their aim was to conquer and besiege Salonika and the surrounding cities. When the Emperor heard the news, he was very disturbed and wrote to Germanus to delay his trip to Italy and help Salonika and the other cities and with all the power in his possession to stop the Slav invasion. And Germanus gave attention to this matter. The Slavs were panic-stricken when they were informed by the prisoners that Germanus was in Serdika. Germanus was renowned among these barbarians for the following reason: when Justinian²⁸, Germanus's uncle (on his grandmother's side), had imperial power, the Antians, who lived near the Slavs, had crossed the River Istar and with a large army entered the Romeian territory. Shortly before this, the Emperor²⁹ had appointed Germanus the strategist for all of Thrace. After engaging the enemy he won the battle with a charge, defeated them all, and with that victory Germanus acquired fame among all the people, especially among those barbarians. Since the Slavs feared him, as I have already said, and because they believed that he was escorted by a large army when he was sent by the Emperor against Tothila³⁰ and the Goths³¹, they immediately gave up their invasion of Salonika and did not have the courage to come down to the plain. Instead, they crossed all the Illyrian mountains and came to Dalmatia.

Procopii Caesariensis, pp. 475—477.

4

THE SLAVS SETTLE THE SALONIKA REGION

The beginning of the 80s of the 6th century

From Ecclesiastical History by John of Ephesus³²

In the third year after the death of the Emperor Justin³³ and the coming to the throne of the victorious Tiberius³⁴, the cursed Slav people attacked. They swiftly crossed the whole of Hellada, the region of Thessaloniki³⁵, and the whole of Thrace and took control of many cities and fortresses. They destroyed and became rulers of the land. They dominated it as their own, as masters without fear. And in the past

²⁸ Here the first publisher made an error in the correction of the text, replacing Justin with Justinian, for Justin I (518—527) was Germanus's "uncle on his grandmother's side" (Византијски извори, I, p. 45, note 89).

²⁹ i. e. Justin I.

³⁰ Tothila, the Ostrogoth king in Italy during the reign of Justinian I.

³¹ Refers to the Eastern Goths in Italy (История Византии, Том I, Moscow, 1967, p. 316 et seq.).

³² The Syrian chronicler John of Ephesus (507—586) is among the first authors of that period who report the Slav colonization of the Balkan peninsula. This extract from his Ecclesiastical History speaks of a very lasting settlement of the Slavs in the region of Salonika at the beginning of the 80s of the VIth century.

³³ Refers to Justin II, Byzantine emperor (565—578).

³⁴ Tiberius I Constantine, Byzantine emperor (578—582).

³⁵ i. e. Salonika.

four years until now, the Emperor has been occupied with the Persian war and is sending all his armies East — for this reason, they have scattered throughout the land, taken hold of it and expanded now, while God permits them. They desolate the land, set fires, and capture prisoners, so that near the outside wall³⁶ itself, they captured all the Emperor's flocks, many thousand (head) and other (livestock). Thus, even today, that is up to the year 895³⁷, they have remained and live peacefully in the land of the Romeians³⁸, carefree and without fear. They capture, kill, and burn. They have become rich: they possess gold and silver, herds of horses, and many weapons, and they have learned to fight better than the Romeians. Those rude folk, who did not dare leave the thick forests and protected places, and were inexperienced with weapons except for two or three lonhidies, that is short spears.

Н. Пигулевская, *Сирийские источники по истории народов СССР. Москва-Ленинград 1941, стр. 140—141.*

5

A SLAV ARMY ATTACKS SALONIKA

584 A. D.³⁹

From The Miracles of Saint Demetrius of Salonika, I.⁴⁰

On October 26th, by custom, the whole land celebrated the day of the triumphant martyr Demetrius⁴¹, who was very fond of his

³⁶ This defensive wall was built in Eastern Thrace, 40 km. from Constantinople, by the Emperor Anastasius I (491—518), by whom it was named „Anastasius's wall". The wall was also known by the name of „The Long Wall". It was built with the aim of protecting the Byzantine capital from barbarian attacks, above all from the Slavs.

³⁷ i. e. the year 584.

³⁸ The term „Romeians" refers to all the subjects of Byzantium. (И. Добровский, Кирилл и Мефодий, славянские первоучители. Moscow 1825, p. 62; История Византии, Т. 1, p. 66).

³⁹ This year as well as other datings from The Miracles of St. Demetrius of Salonika I, II, are given by Ф. Баришић, Чуда Димитрија Солунског као историјски извори, Belgrade, 1953, p. 33 et seq.

⁴⁰ The Miracles of St. Demetrius of Salonika (Miracula Sancti Demetrii) belong to the most important hagiographic studies in early Byzantine literature. They consist of three collections. The first collection, which covers the „Miracles" that refer to the period from the end of the 6th century up to the 20s of the 7th century, was put together by Archbishop Jovan of Salonika, who lived during this period. The second collection covers „the Miracles" that refer to the period from the 20s of the 7th century to the end of it. The author of this collection is anonymous. The third collection of the „Miracles" was probably composed in the 10th century, and does not contain important information about the period of the Slav colonization of Macedonia; for this reason it has been left out.

The first and the second collection of the „Miracles" in fact supplement each other. They contain important authentic data about the earliest history of the South Slavs, especially about the Macedonian Slavs. In most cases these are the data for following the process of the Slav colonization of the Balkan Peninsula, especially in Macedonia. The texts given here are in fact abstracts from the two collections of the Miracles (Miracula I and II).

⁴¹ Demetrius is the legendary warrior, protector and patron of the city of Salonika. See Р. А. Наследова, „Иоанн Камениата, Взятие фессалоники", Две Византийские хроники X века, Moscow, 1959, p. 215, note 7.

city... Nowhere could a barbarian voice be heard. During the second day of the celebration by decision of the victorious leader (the results of the event lead me to speak so) at midnight unexpectedly his silver ciborium⁴² caught fire. When the news spread fast through the city, all the young citizens... gathered in the holy temple... and stopped the dangers of fire. But the masses did not leave...

One man, who served in the famous army of the Dacian Scrinia in the prefecture of Illyricum⁴³ deserves to be mentioned... he began to shout: "Citizens, the barbarians have unexpectedly appeared before the wall. Come out with weapons and defend your fatherland". After hearing this unexpected call the people rushed into their houses and, arming themselves, climbed the wall.

In the field near the holy temple of the Christian martyr Matrona⁴⁴ they saw a barbarian army not so large (for we counted an army of five thousand) but very strong, for it consisted of chosen and experienced fighters. With such a small number they would not have attacked such a large city so unexpectedly, if they had not surpassed in power and impudence those they occasionally fought with⁴⁵...

And late into the night they fought each other and the conqueror's men exposed themselves to great danger with their advancing and withdrawal, because, as was said, their enemy was the chosen flower of the entire Slav people. Finally, when help arrived from the conqueror himself, the barbarians were driven out the same day and they withdrew in large groups from the places that they had entered.

Miraculorum s. Demetrii martyris liber I. Ed. C. Byeus. Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Graeca, t. 116. Paris 1891, col. 1277.

6

AN AVAR-SLAV ARMY ATTACKS SALONIKA AND DESTROYS AND PLUNDERS MACEDONIA

586 A. D.

From The Miracles of Saint Demetrius of Salonika, I.

Finally, it is time to consider the main miracles of the holy martyr and lover city. I would like to mention the greatest miracle,

⁴² The ciborium (κιβώριον, ciborium) was from the beginning a kind of a baldachin on four wooden columns. Underneath it stood the silver coffin containing the relics of St. Demetrius, whose burial place was unknown. See Ф. Баришић in Византијски Извори, I, p. 175, note 2.

⁴³ The term *σκρινίου* in fact indicates the civil service. The Dacian Scrinia was part of the service of the Illyricum Scrinia for the province of coastal Dacia. (Гръцки Извори за българската история III, Sofia, 1960, p. 110, note 1).

⁴⁴ The temple dedicated to St. Matrona was erected by Archbishop Alexander, most probably the one who participated in the Nicene Council of 325. It was located outside Salonika, near the Via Egnatia. In fact it was a fortified monastery. (O. Tafrali, Topographie de Thessalonique, Paris, 1913, p. 189).

⁴⁵ On the basis of this statement F. Barišić concluded that the people of Salonika were familiar with these Slavs from an earlier period. (Ф. Баришић in Византијски Извори I, p. 176, note 5).

that of all the wars that have been fought for Salonika, shines the brightest, and which (miracle) unexpectedly saved us from that dangerous and inevitable siege and it may be said that it raised us from the dead...

It is said that the former leader of the Avars⁴⁶ decided to send emissaries for some reason to the blessed and the reasonable Mauricius, who at that time held authority over the Romeians⁴⁷. However, his request was rejected and he was overcome with unbearable rage, and being unable to do anything to the man that had refused to fulfil his wishes, he invented a means which he thought would bring about the greatest damage to him...

He called to him the whole devoted beastly tribe of the Sclavini⁴⁸, since he had the whole population under his control, and adding to them some other barbarians, he ordered all of them to a campaign against the divinely protected city of Salonika.

My dear ones, it was the biggest army that we had seen in our times. According to some, it consisted of more than a hundred thousand heavily armed men, according to others fewer, and again for others the number was much larger. The truth was hard to define, due to their number, so the opinions of the observers differed. As though we were observing a new army. Xerxes'⁴⁹ army or an army of Ethiopians and Libyans who had previously fought against the Judaeans⁵⁰. We heard that where they stopped the rivers and the springs dried up and wherever they passed the entire earth, as the Prophet says, turned into a devastated field⁵¹.

Thus the majority received an order to cover the route with such speed that we did not learn of their arrival until a day ago; since their arrival became known on Sunday, September 22nd. And while the population doubted whether they would reach these regions, after four or five days, and due to their carelessness in the protection of the

⁴⁶ Refers to the Avar hagan, Bajan. See Ф. Баришић, Византијски сингидинум. — Зборник Радова Византолошког Института, 3, Belgrade, 1955, p. 10 et seq., L. Hauptman, „Les rapports des Byzantins avec les Slaves et les Avars pendant la seconde moitié du VI^e siècle, Byzantion IV (1927—1928), pp. 137—170.

⁴⁷ Mauricius, Byzantine emperor (582—602).

⁴⁸ Here the term “Sclavini” (Σκλαβίνοι) refers to the separate Slav territories on the left bank of the River Danube, which as a result of the “Great Migration, of the Peoples”, by the end of the 5th century were densely populated with Slav tribes. See Б. Панов, Охрид и Охридската област..., p. 119; also cf. А. И. Голубцов; О термине склавины; in Проблемы общественно-политической истории России и славянских стран, сб. статей к 70-летию акад. М. Н. Тихомирова, Moscow, 1963, p. 47 et seq. The Avar hagan had imposed his command over the Sclavini below the middle course of the River Danube. (Г. Острогорски, Историја Византије, p. 99). Theophilactus Simokata reports on the Emperor Mauricius's campaigns against the Sclavini beyond the Danube. (Византијски Извори, I, p. 177 and note 7).

⁴⁹ Here the author makes a comparison with of the Persian king Xerxes (486—465 B. C.), who in 481 crossed the Hellespont and entered Greece.

⁵⁰ Refers to 971 B. C. when Jerusalem was attacked by a large number of Libyans and Ethiopians.

⁵¹ Joel I, 3.

city, they arrived silently before the city walls⁵² on Monday morning. The protective shade of the famous martyr Demetrius appeared at once — that night he blinded them and detained them for many hours around the fortifications of the triumphant martyr Matrona, so that they would believe that it was the city. At last when dawn broke and they learned that the city was near, they threw themselves on it as one, like a lion that grasps and roars⁵³. Afterwards they set against the wall the ladders which they had brought ready-made, since some of their soldiers had rashly decided to climb the wall. Namely, at that moment the famous and great miracle of the holy Victor occurred...

And then the masses became more visible. Namely, they besieged the city like a deadly wreath from the end of the eastern wall by the sea up to the end of the western side of the wall, near the sea, so that no spot on the ground could be seen that the barbarians had not stepped on. Instead of earth, trees and grass, the heads of the enemy could be seen, which were next to each other, and in that way they frightened us with the inevitable death of the morrow. It seemed strange that on this day not only did they besiege the wall, as the sand does the sea, but a large number of them captured the fortifications surrounding the city and its vicinity, at the same time grabbing, destroying, and stepping on anything that was left behind. Then, they did not have to make a trench or an embankment, since then a trench was the direct interlacing of their shields, touching each other, while the mass of living bodies interwoven like a net made an embankment...

Then, the city was faced with an unexpressed fear, having seen for the first time a barbarian phalanx, for never before had they seen the enemy approaching so close (and most of the citizens did not even know) what the enemy looked like⁵⁴ only those who were enrolled in the army lists. Then, in fact, courage became equal for the brave and the fearful. Among them no difference existed, for they had lost hope for salvation, they all wept and they were overcome by a terrible depression which changed them all...

They all believed that the salvation of the city was something impossible, since every hope was lost among the people. Firstly, because (then, up to the month of July) the terrible plague had gripped the city and by God's humanity (it had received about 50 days) some kind of rest. Suddenly, as was said, on September 22nd the wrath of God overtook those barbarians who had found the few inhabitants of the city in a state of mourning for the recently buried. Secondly, those that besieged (the city) were equal to the sand in numbers. For if one was to

⁵² Salonika began to surround itself with thick walls from the Hellenistic epoch. In the course of the Roman and the Byzantine rule, the city was permanently protected by defensive walls. See O. Tafrali, *Topographie de Thessalonique*, Paris, 1913, p. 30 et seq.; also cf. Е. Э. Липшиц. *Очерки истории византийского общества и культуры* (VIII — первая половина IX века), Moscow and Leningrad, 1961, p. 108 et seq.

⁵³ Psalm XXI, 14.

⁵⁴ Here the author emphasises that until then the people of Salonika had not seen such a large army, and not that they had not previously seen the "barbarian" soldiers. (*Византијски Извори*, I, p. 178, note II).

imagine them in a heap, not only the Macedonians⁵⁵ gathered in Salo- nika, but also the Thessalians and the Achaeans⁵⁶, then we would not even have a small part of those that besieged the city from the outside. Thirdly, the biggest reason that increased our helplessness was that a minimal number of unablebodied inhabitants and soldiers were to be found in the city, and they were still ill (of the plague), while the majority were cut off in the fields in the season of grape-picking and could not enter the city. The enemies besieged the fortification sud- denly and unexpectedly close. Therefore, the city was left with a small number of people from various causes, and the hopeless situation took away all hope of salvation...

And here is what happened next. Then, the same day, after we had come out, they took care of collecting food, prisoners, material goods, and an abundance of wheat, also grabbing other foods. And all that the earth bore and all that was left over as a reserve from the previous years was outside and it was barely enough for that day. Afterwards they gathered the fruits from the trees, the branches and their roots, as well as all the vegetables, and then the fresh grass, the wild fruits, the so-called green thorns, finally licking the dust of the earth⁵⁷. But they remained hungry, and the earth could not bear their weight. The same night as their arrival, they collected wood and lit fires around the city...

The whole night, afterwards, we heard noises around us. The next day they had mounted hellepoles⁵⁸ iron rams, huge stonethrowers and the so-called tortoises, which, like the stonethrowers, they had covered with dry skins⁵⁹. But later they had an idea and fastened to the equipment the bloodstained skins of the recently slaughtered oxen

⁵⁵ Refers to the ancient original inhabitants of Macedonia, who as a sepa- rate people were formed in the 4th century B. C. After the abolition of the ancient Macedonian state in the middle of the 2nd century B. C. by the Ro- mans and the transformation of Macedonia into a Roman province, they con- tinued to exist as a separate nation, although during the Roman and the By- zantine rule they were reduced in number due to the frequent barbarian attacks on Macedonia. See Г. И. Кацаров, Етнографическо положение на старите Ма- кедонци. — Минало, г. I, кн. 3, 1909, Sofia, p. 265 et seq.; А. С. Шофман, Ис- тория Античной Македонии, 4, I, Казан, 1960, p. 99 et seq.; А. С. Шофман, Очерки по истории Македонии и македонского народа, Т. I, Казан, 1960, p. 32 et seq.. During the Slav colonization at the end of the 6th century and the beginning of the 7th century, some of the Macedonians submitted to the Slavs and gradually became assimilated; others withdrew to the mountains and pre- served their customs, and a large number sheltered in Salonika or left Ma- cedonia and settled mainly in Thrace, around the city of Adrianople and from those settlers later on Byzantium formed a speial theme named "Macedonia" after them. (Cf. П. Ст. Коледаров, Образуване на тема „Македония“ в Тракия. — Известия на Института за история, Т. 21, 1970, Sofia, p. 226 et seq.; Б. Па- нов, За етногенезата на македонскиот народ. — Гласник на Институтот за На- ционална Историја, г. XVII, бр. 3, Skopje, 1972, p. 77 et seq.).

⁵⁶ Refers to the inhabitants of Thessalu and Achaea, who according to F. Barišić, in this period were greatly reduced in number; he believes the same of the Macedonians (Византијски Избори, I, p. 178, note IIa).

⁵⁷ Micah VII, 17.

⁵⁸ These siege equipment resembled multi-storied towers set on wheels with reference to them and their origin see Византијски Извори, I p. 180 note 14.

⁵⁹ V. Zlatarski believes that most of the siege equipment was used even in ancient times. (В. Н. Златарски, История на българската държава през сред- ните векове, Т. I, 4, I, Sofia, 1918, p. 451 et seq.).

and camels, so that they would not suffer from fire or from the boiling pitch. And so they brought them near the wall, and from the third day onwards they threw stones whose size resembled large boulders. Furthermore, their archers with their arrows gave the impression of winter snow, so that nobody from the wall could bend over and have a look outside without danger. After they had also brought the tortoises right up to the exterior wall, they dug out its foundations hard with levers and hatchets...

And then when all were spiritually and physically benumbed by the griefs they had seen, and by the expected larger misfortunes, unexpectedly on the third day of the siege and afterwards their spirits were raised and they began to laugh and make jokes with the enemy. Similarly with invitations and (promises) the majority of them managed to persuade them to move towards the city, so that the public baths, that were no longer in use⁶⁰, were filled by those that crossed from the barbarian majority, and caused great joy and bravery among the citizens...

... As we have mentioned, these enemies on the first and the second days of the siege had collected all the food and prepared many terrible and varied forms of siege equipment against the city. From the third to the seventh day (for the famous martyr would not permit them to hold the city under siege any longer), they brought everything to the wall: hellepoles, rams, stone-throwers and tortoises covered with fences that were dragged along the ground⁶¹. At first they were directed against what is called the Cassandrian Gate⁶². However, having seen that the city protectors had hung on it some kind of a short iron hook, similar to a scarecrow for children⁶³, they were struck with fear before this device — I want to emphasize that it was a ram, — so without doing anything, they retired to their tents, setting fire to it, and everything that resembled it...

Let the righteous listener judge in fact whether those that came out to the front fortress armed only with a spear and a bow could have caused damage to those that were under the tortoises and dug with levers? Where and what was the reason for their mistake? Certainly he who inspired the Macedonians with courage. In this case, the enemy was deprived of help by God's solution...

... From early morning till seven each day the enemy threw those enormous stones, but almost none of them fell upon the wall, but either inside or outside the wall, so where they fell they made holes. While on the other hand, the greater part of the stones thrown from the city, as by command, fell on the narrow peaks of the barbarians' stone-throwers and killed those that were inside...

⁶⁰ In its appearance medieval Salonika did not differ from other medieval cities. With the exception of two streets, the others were very narrow and short. See Е. Э. Липшиц, *Очерки Истории...* p. 109 et seq..

⁶¹ With reference to them see А. Taugard, *De l'histoire profane dans les Actes grecs des bollandistes*. Paris, 1874, p. 25.

⁶² The Cassandrian Gate was one of the four gates located on the east side of the defensive wall. Before it rose the second triumphal arch, and the city market was nearby. See О. Тафрали, *Топография*, p. 95; Е. Э. Липшиц, *Очерки истории...*, p. 108 et seq..

⁶³ This was a hanging wooden door which was raised and lowered. (Византијски Извори, I, p. 182, note 18).

It was holy Sunday, the seventh and final (day) of our siege, when the enemies calmed down, as if they were resting from the fatigue of the past days, to begin a battle of life or death against the city the next day, when all of them jointly, without exception, would attack the fortification from all sides, aiming to frighten and get the protectors down from the cogs or, if they were not to fulfil their goal, in the act to convince themselves of the futility of further battle.

And truly, after they had made their decision, as we were to learn from those who had fled, we were also struck with fear before the test that awaited us the next day, the same day, unexpectedly, about eight o'clock from all sides the barbarians screamed with a joint scream and ran towards the hills, leaving their tents with the equipment behind...

Moreover, the citizens, sending of horsemen, learned that the enemies had really run off, that during the night they had passed a long distance, withdrawing in panic and with fear, and that along the way they had left behind their equipment, livestock and prisoners...

Mirac. I, 13, p. 1255-14, 1313; A. Taugard, De l'histoire profane dans les Actes grecs des bolandistes Paris 1874, p. 89-104.

7

THE MACEDONIAN SLAV TRIBES LED BY PRINCE HACON ATTACK SALONIKA

614—616 A. D.

From The Miracles of Saint Demetrius of Salonika, II.

And so, it happened, as has been said, that during the office of the blessed passed away, Bishop Jovan⁶⁴ the Slav nation, which consisted of a countless majority of Dragoviti⁶⁵, Sagudati⁶⁶, Velegiziti⁶⁷, Vajuniti⁶⁸, Berziti⁶⁹ and other tribes⁷⁰, rose. Firstly, they learned to make

⁶⁴ This refers to Archbishop Jovan of Salonika, the author of the first collection of Miracles. He lived at the end of the 6th century and into the 7th.

⁶⁵ The tribe of the Draguviti (Δρογουβίται) lived west of Salonika. See M. Vasmer, *Die Slaven in Griechenland*, Berlin, 1941, p. 177; P. Lemerle, *Philippe et la Macédoine orientale*, Paris, 1926, p. 116; P. Наследова in *Две византийские хроники X века*, p. 218, note 6; *История Византии*, I, p. 350.

⁶⁶ The tribe of the Sagudati (Σαγούδατοι) had settled west of the city of Salonika, as well as on the Chalcidice Peninsula. See P. Наследова, *Две византийские хроники X века*, p. 218 note 6; *Византијски извори*, I, p. 188, note 4; *История Византии*, I, p. 350.

⁶⁷ The Velegizit (Βελεγεζίται) lived in Thessaly around the cities of Thebes and Demetriada, that is near the present-day bay of Volo. See E. Э. Липшиц, *Очерки Истории...*, p. 30; M. Vasmer, *Die Slaven in Griechenland*, p. 85, 108; *Византијски извори*, I, p. 188, note 5; *История Византии*, I, p. 351.

⁶⁸ The Vojuniti (Βαϊουνίται) were located west of Salonika along the upper course of the River Bistrica. See *Византијски извори*, I, p. 189, note 6; *История Византии*, I, p. 350.

⁶⁹ The territory of the tribe of Berziti (Βερζίται) extended between the presentday cities of Kavadarci, Titov Veles, Prilep, Bitola, Kičevo, Ohrid and Debar, also including Prespa. See Б. Панов, *Охрид и охридската област...* Sofia, 1928, p. 99; E. Э. Липшиц, *Очерки и истории...*, p. 30.

⁷⁰ These were the Slav tribes of the Smoljani (ἐπὶ τοῦ Σμολεάνου) who p. 123; cf. also Ив. Снегаров, *Град Охрид. Македонски преглед*, г. IV кн. 1,

small boats, cut out of one piece of wood, and after they had armed themselves for the sea, they devastated all of Thessaly, the surrounding islands, the Hellades and Cyclades all of Achaëa, Epirus, and the larger part of Illyricum and part of Asia. Along the way they devastated many cities and regions and unanimously decided to attack and destroy our Christ-loving city, as (they had done) the others. Afterwards, after they had come to an agreement about that, with the prepared small boats, cut out of one piece of wood and which were in large number, they took up their positions in camp by the sea shore. The remaining immense majority besieged this holy protected city from all sides, from the east, north and west, bringing their household furniture, which they planned to place inside after taking the city⁷¹.

And then tears were shed, and cries could be heard from all the inhabitants of the city with the news that spread, for they had learned of the indescribable destructions of the cities and of the countless slaughters and seizures that had been performed, and for the reason that everyone everywhere knew their downfall. Besides that the local (inhabitants) were left without small boats, and there were none from the surrounding places, nor were there any the protection of the entrance of this port.

The inhabitants were overcome with a greater fear from the Christian refugees⁷², that had already encountered this merciless army. And then, both the brave and fearful were in the same spiritual state: everyone could see the harsh pillage or death in his mind's eye, without having another opportunity for escape, according to the holy word that says "If you escape from this city into another", since the entire barbarian nation of the Slavs was besieging the city like a deadly wreath...

And when the entire Slav nation had lined up to attack the fortification suddenly as one, the Slavs that were in the small boats decided to cover them on top with planks and animal skins, and during the attack on the fortification the oarsmen were to protect themselves from stone wounds and arrows shot against them. At first... the supreme power exerted by the martyr frightened them away from heading directly against the city, so that they made for a bay where a harbour and existed from the old times called Kalarion⁷³. And the bar-

lived in various places (Д. Дичев, Где сжж живели смолениите, Сборник в чест на В. Н. Златарски, Sofia, 1925, p. 45 et seq.); the Strumjani (οἱ (ἀπὸ) τοῦ Στρυμῶνος) by the Struma and in Strumica (F. Dvornik, La vie de Saint Grégoire le Dédapolite et les Slaves Macédoniens au IX^e siècle, Paris, 1926, p. 31; P. Наследова, Македонские славяне конца IX — начала X в. по данным Ионна Каменаты — Византийский временник XI, Moscow, 1956, p. 82 et seq.; Две византийские хроники X века, pp. 171—2, 230—232; Б. Панов, Општествено политичките прилики во Струмичката област, p. 208, note 44; the Rinhini (Ρυγχίνοι) east of the Sagudati, on the shores of Orfan bay (F. Dvornik, Les Slaves, Byzance et Rome au IX^e siècle, Paris, 1926, p. 14; P. Lamerle, Philippes et le Macédoine orientale, p. 115—116; Е. Э. Липшиц, Очерки истории... p. 30.

⁷¹ Refers to the Macedonian Slav tribes that had already settled around Salonika and in addition tried to colonize the city itself. (Б. Панов, За етностноста на македонскиот народ, pp. 80—81; cf. also Iv. Beuc, Još o problemu formiranja feudalnih država u Južnih Slavena, Radovi, 8, izd. Sveučilište u Zagrebu — Institut za Hrvatsku povjest, Zagreb, 1976, p. 67.

⁷² i. e. the Byzantines.

barbarians were late, having set off there to carry out what they imagined to be a cunning thing, and those in the city became more courageous, for they had gained a little time. During that time at the port they erected some kind of wooden supports, over which they placed chains, as well as some iron bars, some with sharpened rods, and others with sword-like nails, which stuck out above the wood. Immediately next to them, they placed the other small boats that they happened to find, called kivei⁷⁴, and having anchored them next to each other near the entrance to the harbour, they made a passage for the expected battle...

Thus, three days passed by, and the small Slav boats sailed at a distance of two miles from the fortification, watching the easily approachable places each day, from where they had the intention of seizing (the city). On the fourth day, at sunrise, the whole barbarian tribe shouted as one and attacked from all sides of the city wall, some shooting stones from the prepared stone-throwers, others bringing the ladders close to the wall, trying to take it, while others carried fire to the gates and the rest threw arrows at the fortress like snowflakes. And an unusual sight could be seen: the numberless weapons like hailclouds overshadowed the sunbeams, covering the air with arrows and shooting stones.

During the powerful attack, the barbarians braver in navigation and more daring in combat, quickly approached with their small boats to the places observed, some steering west towards the unfortified part, where the trenches and the equipment with the disguised thorns were located, called tili. Those to whom such traps were unknown, hoped that they would enter from there, while others believed that they would more easily break down the small doorway mentioned and through it carry out the occupation of the city. Precisely then the whole city, instead of stones and arrows, before God, the master of all, shed tears like rain-clouds...

... And here is the greatest miracle that is truly worth mentioning. The leader of those Slavs⁷⁵, by name, wished by his custom to learn through prophecy⁷⁶, whether he would enter our holy protected city; it was replied that he would enter, but he was not told how. And truly, by the prophecy he had been told, it seemed as if he would succeed; with his impudence he hurried the event.

But he who changes conditions and seasons and hampers the enemy's wishes, he delivered him alive as a prisoner to the citizens through

⁷³ The harboure of Kilarion as located on the east side of the city. (Th. Tafel, *De Thessalonica eiusque agro dissertatio geographica*, Berolini, 1839, p. 220).

⁷⁴ Refers to cargo boats.

⁷⁵ Ὁ τῶν αὐτῶν Σκλαβίνων ἑξάρχος, τοῦνομα χάτζων. Hacon in fact stood at the head of a large tribal union, that was prevented by Byzantium from growing into a state of the Macedonian Slavs. (Б. Пандов, *за етногенезата на македонскиот народ*, p. 81.).

⁷⁶ This information shows that the Slavs in Macedonia, who were a compact, unit continued to worship their pagan customs and to resist the Christian religion, which the native Christians tried to impose in different ways. See B. Grafenauer, *Nekaj vprašanj iz dobe naseljevanja Južnih Slovanov*, p. 103.

the afore-mentioned small doorway. Some of the prominent people of our city sheltered him in their homes for some benefit of their own and with bad intentions. But this time, too, the care of the Victor was not missing, inspired by Christ. Imbuing the women with male courage, they dragged him out of the house where he was hiding and, having escorted him through the city they stoned him. And so he received a deserved death, worthy of his hostile intentions. But let none of you who love the martyr question this crude and short story. If anyone believes that I have untruly described all of this, may he look at the inscription before the holy temple of the eternal memory of martyr Demetrius, on the side of the so-called bell-tower, which (inscription) shows the entire course of the battle⁷⁷...

Mirac., II, p. 1325—1333; Tougard, p. 118—126.

8

THE ENCIRCLEMENT OF SALONIKA WITH SLAVIC SETTLEMENTS

C. 618 A. D.

From The Miracles of Saint Demetrius of Salonika, II.

After the afore-mentioned immense Slav attack, that is by Hacon, and after the easy and righteous slaughter that befell them with the aid of the Victor, and finally after the shameful war they fought against us, they suffered quite some damage, when their prisoners escaped to our holy protected city, who were released by their leader and saviour, and by our protector, Demetrius. In fact, among them this caused bitterness, because in addition to their being deprived of the prisoners, the latter, in escaping to us here, had also taken some of their war booty. Great poverty forced them to call a meeting⁷⁸, and after collecting a large number of gifts, they sent them via emissaries to the hagan of the Avars, promising and assuring him that if he offered allied help, they would give him for his support a large sum of money, which they would rob from our city⁷⁹. In the process, he himself admitted that the city would fall easily and they also stated that it would be

⁷⁷ The Church of St. Demetrius that was built at the beginning of the 5th century was quite a large temple (43m long and 33m, wide). With reference to its history see Две византийские хроники X века, p. 227, note 4.

⁷⁸ This information points to the fact that social structure of the Slavs in the territories across the Danube in the colonized Macedonian regions has not changed much. See Iv. Beuc, Još o problemu formiranja država u Južnih Slovena, p. 67 et seq.; cf. also Б. Панов. Охрид и Охридската област..., p. 130 et seq.

⁷⁹ Certainly a large portion of the riches of those wealthy Byzantines was in Salonika, who fleeig before the Slavs, had found shelter in this fortified

seized by them and not only was it surrounded by them, but that all the cities and regions that depended upon it were deserted, so that only it, as was said, stood surrounded by their settlements⁸⁰ and took in all the refugees from the Danube regions, Panonia, Dacia, Dardania⁸¹ and the remaining provinces and cities, offering them shelter...

Mirac., II, 2, 1336; Tougard, p. 128—130.

9

ATTEMPTS OF THE SLAV PEOPLE NEAR SALONIKA
TO TAKE THE CITY

C. 630 A. D.

From The Miracles of Saint Demetrius of Salonika, II.

The Slav people, who lived in the vicinity⁸², could not even approach the city (owing to the earthquakes) let alone sieze it, and they were those who had wanted to occupy it earlier, while the fortifications were intact and the inhabitants had not dispersed, although for several days the earthquakes had not stopped, and the majority of what remained behind the fortifications had fallen, as they say, and when the gates were opened, and the majority of the unarmed people had dispersed, for nobody had the courage to enter the houses...

And so, during these divine tortures, those of the Slavs mentioned, that had settled in our vicinity⁸³ triumphed anouncing with songs the miracles of our salvation that had been performed by the saviour and victor of the city. Namely, they told that during the first strong earthquake, after which continous ones had followed for several hours they

city. (Византијски извори, I p, 195). This is why the city of Salonika was for a long time the target of Slavo-Avarian attacks, (Ibid., 177; cf. also Б. Панов, Охрид и охридската област, pp. 130—131).

⁸⁰ These were free village communes that grew out of the destroyed slave — holding economies, which represented a devastating blow to the slave holding order in all of Macedonia. With eference to this see. А. П. Каждан, Еще раз об аграрных отношениях в Византии. Византийский временник, XVI, Moscow, 1959, pp 110—111.; Б. Панов, За Етногенезата на македонскиот народ, p. 83. Moreover, as in the regions across the Danube, in colonized Macedonia the Slav houses were also ordinary cottages. (Mirac., II, 5, 1365; Tougard 190).

⁸¹ Panonia, Dacia and Dardania were Byzantine provinces. The last, Dardania, extended to north Macedonia. See Гръцки извори за българската история, III, p. 134, notes 2—4.

⁸² From the statements by the anonymous author we may see that until the 630s the entire area around Salonika was inhabited by separate Slav tribes. See Б. Панов, Охрид и охридската област..., p. 122; История Византии, I, p. 348.

⁸³ Ibidem.

had seen the whole air darken, as they said from the dust from the ruins. And having climbed down towards the hills near the city, they had seen the entire city ruined, and taking their shovels and other necessary tools, they had run out unarmed to dig up and pilfer the household goods, all that was left in the homes of the inhabitants, for it seemed to them that all of them had perished. And so, having left with that intention and coming closer by, they saw that the whole fortification on all the sides was undamaged and that the city remained as before, and that the soldiers that were standing on guard on the fortification could be seen from the outside; and so they had returned frightened and without result...

Mirac., II, 3; *Tougard*, p. 140—144.

10

BYZANTIUM'S ATTEMPTS TO SUBJUGATE THE SCLAVINII

658 A. D.

*From the Chronographia by Theophanes the Confessor*⁸⁴

In that year⁸⁵, the Emperor⁸⁶, went to war against the Sclavinii⁸⁷, enslaved and subjugated many⁸⁸.

Theophanis Chronographia. Ed. C. de Boor. I, Lipsiae 1883, p. 347, 6—7.

⁸⁴ Theophanes the Confessor (c. 760—818) to the end of his life led an active battle against the Iconoclast Emperors. As a result, during the reign of Leo V (813—820) he was driven into exile on the island of Samothrace, where he died. As a writer, Theophanes left behind a *Chronographia*, which is in fact an extension of the unfinished chronicle of his friend, Georgi Sinkel. The authentic data that refer to the period from the second half of the 7th century to the beginning of the 9th century are of special importance to Macedonian history. For more details of Theophanes and his work, see И. С. Чичуров, *Византийские исторические сочинения*, Moscow, 1980, p. 17 et seq.

⁸⁵ i. e. the year of 658.

⁸⁶ Constantine II (641—668).

⁸⁷ Here the term Sclavinii (Σκλαυινίαι) refers to the regions of the separate Slav tribes, i. e. the independant Slav principalities in Macedonia, Thrace and Hellada (Greece). See Ив. Дуйчев, *Славяни и първобългари*. — Известия на Института за българска история, 1—2, Sofia, 1951, S. Antoljak, p. 196, note 5 et seq. cf. also. „Unsere Sklavinien (Extrait des Actes du XII^e Congrès International des Etudec Byzantines”, t. II, Belgrade 1964, pp. 9—13; История Византии, I, p. 370.

⁸⁸ Most probably the Slavs settled in the surroundings of Salonika were affected by this campaign. (Б. Панов, *Охрид и Охридската област...*, p. 133; cf also Г. Острогорски, *Историја Византије*, p. 132.

THE EMPEROR CONSTANS II UNDERTAKES A CAMPAIGN
AGAINST SCLAVINIA
658 A. D.

*From the Chronographia Tripartita by Anastasius Bibliothecarius*⁸⁹

In the sixteenth year⁹⁰ of his reign the Emperor⁹¹ raised his army against Sclavinia⁹², took many prisoners and subjugated it.

Anastasius Bibliothecarius, Chronographia Tripartita. Ed. C. de Boor. II, Lipsiae 1883, p. 218, 3—10.

BYZANTIUM PREVENTS THE MACEDONIAN SLAVS FROM
ESTABLISHING THEIR STATE HEADED BY THE
RINHINIAN REX PREBOND

574—677 A. D.

From The Miracles of Saint Demetrius of Salonika, II.

After partially presenting as I had imagined, the great number of miracles of the renowned conqueror and our protector, Demetrius..., I will pass on to the problem that he now expressed..., and now against all expectations he saved the city from inevitable dangers. Because, these often mentioned Slavs, who have settled in the vicinity of this holy protected city, only appeared to be keeping the peace⁹³. He who then ruled this region, I do not know how or why, sent a report to the divinely wise ears of him who by God's will reigns over us⁹⁴ aga-

⁸⁹ Anastasius Bibliothecarius (c. 800—880) is one of the most important Latin sources for the study of the Byzantino-Slav relations from the 8th to the 9th century. He is famous for his works *Chronographia Tripartita* and *Biographies of the Roman Popes*. The excerpts given here are from the work *Chronographia Tripartita*. In fact this is a Latin translation of the *Chronographia* by Theophanes, that was translated by Anastasius in the 870s. This translation was made from older manuscripts than the *Chronographia* by Theophanes and for that reason the authentic data from the works of Anastasius have greater credibility. See И. С. Чичуров, *Византийские исторические сочинения*, p. 19.

⁹⁰ i. e. the year 658.

⁹¹ Constans II.

⁹² This Sclavinia is one of those mentioned by Theophanes. (cf. *Византијски извори*, I. p. 222, notes 9 & 10).

⁹³ These were only illusory friendly relations between Byzantium and the Macedonian Slav tribes around Salonika. (Б. Панов, *Охрид и охридската област...*, p. 133).

⁹⁴ Refers to the Emperor Constantine IV (668—685).

inst the rex of the Rinhinians, by the name of Prebond⁹⁵ that was making plans against our city with a shrewd and malicious intention.

This holy crowned Emperor, sent his letter to the prefect⁹⁶, with the order to send him the rex bound in a manner that he considered appropriate. And that letter pleasing to God was specially shown to the most eminent elders, who immediately captured him, since he was in the city and sent him off in chains to the mentioned holy honoured Emperor, as it said in the letter pleasing to God.

And after this happened and all the Slav people found out, that is both sides, those from Rinhina⁹⁷ and those from Strimon⁹⁸, together with the city they decided to ask the afore mentioned master not to execute him, but to forgive his mistake and send him to them, begging him to set him free. And so, with that aim some local experienced men were sent voluntarily to the most gracious Emperor, together with the chosen Slav emissaries who found His blessed Highness preparing for resistance against the Agariani⁹⁹, despised of God so that he came to an agreement with all of these emissaries that he would free Prebond after the war¹⁰⁰.

And with such an agreement he sent them back here, ordering that he be unfettered and given clothes and his everyday needs satisfied. When the afore -- mentioned emissaries returned together with the barbarians with this promise, all the Slavs renounced their rage.

However, the enemy to all and the demon from the oldest entanglements discovered to his misfortune in the person of one of the imperial interpreters, known to and like by the afore-mentioned Prebond, a means for him to escape and go to his lands located in the Thracian region, arranging to arrive himself in a few days and to fetch him and take him to his own country and save him.

⁹⁵ Κατὰ τοῦ τῶν Ῥυχίνων ῥηγός, τοῦτον Περβόνδου. About the name of the Rinhinian tribal leader Περβόνδου, as well as of his title ῥήγας, ῥήξ there is a ramification of viewpoints among the experts or The Miracles of Saint Demetrius of Salonika. In relation to the question of the name itself, some scholars have decided on Prebond, others for Prvud, and yet others for Pervund. See Византијски извори I, p. 199; note 32; О. В. Иванова, Славяне и фессалоника во второй половине VII в. по данным „Чудеса св. Димитрия“. Сборник „Славянские древности“. Изд. Наукова думка, Киев, 1980, p. 84, et seq.. As for Prebond's title, it is treated as „prince“ and „king“. See О. В. Иванова, Славяне..., p. 101, note 4; Б. Панов, Охрид и охридската област..., pp. 123, 135.

⁹⁶ In this period the prefect was only the head of the city of Salonika, because the prefecture Illyricum had disappeared as a result of the Slav colonization (P. Lemerle, Invasion et migrations dans les Balkans depuis la fin de l'époque romaine jusqu'au VII^e siècle, Revue historique, CCXI. Paris 1954, p. 270).

⁹⁷ This information quite determinedly states that the tribe of the Rinhini received its name from the River Rinhina. See Византијски извори, I, p. 200, note 33; Iv. Beuc, Još o problemu formiranja feudalnih država u Južnih Slovena, p. 66.

⁹⁸ The name of the Strumiani was also derived from the River Struma. See Византијски извори, I, p. 200, note 33).

⁹⁹ Refers to the Arabs.

¹⁰⁰ The departure of the "selected Slav emissaries" in Constantinople and the agreement of the Emperor Constantine IV to negotiate with them is per-tory of Macedonia (Византијски извори, I, p. 200, note 33a). This was certainly due to the fact that in the 7th century, as P. Lemerle emphasizes, "Macedonia was more Slav than Greek". (P. Lemerle, Philippos..., p. 115—116).

After coming to this mutual agreement, the rex Prebond, who was dressed in Romeian clothing and spoke our language¹⁰¹, as though he were one of our citizens, left the Vlachern Gate and went to the interpreter's lands, where he resided in secrecy. However, after Prebond was searched for in the capital and was not found, and since no one knew of the agreement between him and the interpreter, the bearer of the sceptre and the elders were overcome with great despair. He ordered sea traffic to be stopped on all sides, all the gates of the city to be shut and all the horsemen and ships to be sent everywhere to search for the afore-mentioned Prebond¹⁰². The search (for Prebond) lasted around forty days, when daily one after another (posse) was sent out.

The Emperor ordered those that protected him to be slaughtered by the sword, after great torture; while others that were under suspicion were to have their limbs cut off; others to be imprisoned and tortured, and the work of the practorians¹⁰³ to be stopped and, to put it simply, a great number of people were exposed to danger owing to this escape, even he who was in charge of the city administration¹⁰⁴ of was sent here, for he became hated. And it could be seen that this entire fortunate city was overcome by great panic, sorrow and tears. And immediately after the escape of the afore-mentioned Prebond, the Christ-loving Emperor, who took care of everything with a dromon¹⁰⁵, quickly informed our city of his escape, ordering us to take care for our safety and to collect spare food, for the city was expected soon to be attacked by the Slav people.

... And contrary to expectations, when the search for the afore-mentioned Prebond was about to fail, he was unexpectedly discovered on the property of the afore-mentioned interpreter, hiding in the reeds near the city of the Vizitanians¹⁰⁶, secretly provided with food by the interpreter's wife. And that was a result of heavenly Providence, because rex Prebond endured and remained there for many days, although the place was located at a large distance from the capital city, he was not under suspicion, and he was near to the other Slav tribes, where he could escape and be rescued. But, as has been said, by request of the Victor our merciful God wisely performed that miracle, as we shall explain further on through the statements of Prebond himself.

After he was captured and taken to the most fortunate city, they questioned him about his escape, and he told them that he had escaped on the advice and by agreement of the afore-mentioned interpreter and

¹⁰¹ i. e. the Greek language.

¹⁰² From this part of the text it can clearly be seen that Prebond was not an ordinary tribal prince, but „king“, who stood at the head of a large Slav tribal union, which was on its way to becoming a state. See Г. Баласчев, Най-старата славянска държава на Балканския полуостров през VII и VIII век и нейния етнически състав с две карти, Sofia, 1924, p. 7. F. Grivec, Slovanska apostola Sv. Ciril in Method, Ljubljana, 1927, p. 5; Б. Панов, За етногенезата на македонскиот народ, p. 81 et seq..

¹⁰³ i. e. the state tax clerks.

¹⁰⁴ Refers to the prefect of the city.

¹⁰⁵ The dromon was a battle ship with two rows of oars. See H. Ahrweir, Byzance et la mer, Paris, 1965, p. 410.

¹⁰⁶ Refers to the inhabitants of the ancient south Thracian city of Viza, which carries the same name today.

that they had come to an agreement that he should wait for him, because he was to be saved through him. Then the Christ-loving Emperor who surpassed all in his virtue, ordered the afore-mentioned interpreter to be slaughtered by the sword, together with his wife and children, and Prebond was left untouched, but he ordered him to be put under guard as before, promising to let him come to us with some kind of a guarantee.

But the dangerous demon, enemy to all, was not satisfied with this, so he induced Prebond to escape once more. And when he wanted to put this idea into action, his decision was discovered by divine concern and the kind Emperor was notified, also of the aim and intention he had if he was to succeed in escaping.

And when careful investigation had been carried out, he stated that if he were to return to his lands, he would not keep the peace. On the contrary, he would gather all the tribes that surrounded him and, as was said, he would furthermore not leave one place untouched by war, neither on land or sea, but he would fight continuously, and he would not let any Christians¹⁰⁷ stay alive. And so through divine help his intention was revealed, and as was said, he brought death on himself, receiving his deserved destruction¹⁰⁸, so that the tribes of the afore-mentioned Slavs, those from Strimon and Rinhina, and the Sagudati, all raised their weapons against our city of Salonika.

And firstly, among themselves they decided that the Slavs of Strimon were to plunder the eastern and northern regions, and those from Rinhina and the Sagudati the western and the coastal regions, each day sending joined boats. And they did this constantly for nearly two whole years¹⁰⁹.

Daily, as has been said, they sent groups of three or four (small boats) so that in the end the city population was reduced to a few, and they could not withstand such disturbances and tortures...

...But, when at last many people joined the barbarians (God) inspired the enemy with this kind of idea: they would sell to the Slav people in the provinces¹¹⁰ all those who had come over to them, so that they would not gather there en masse and change their minds when they were close to the city. And when the barbarians had carried out their aim and some had escaped with the help of the Victor, then the others, who were preparing to escape, began to hold back, for in that manner almost all of the city would have remained without inhabitants before the barbarians could have taken it...

Then the administrator of the city council and the citizens decided to send the remaining boats equipment, the monocksiles, together with the afore-mentioned ten ships, to the tribe of the Velegiziti to the regions of Thebes and Demetriada, so that finally they could bring food, that is buy dried fruit from them, so in that way they could aid

¹⁰⁷ i. e. a Byzantine

¹⁰⁸ This happened in the year of 674 A. D. (Ф. Баришић, Чуда р. 124).

¹⁰⁹ i. e. in the years of 675 A. D. (Ф. Баришић, Чуда, pp. 107, 124).

¹¹⁰ This part of the text persuasively states that in the provinces of Macedonia, the Slavini existed quite independently. See Б. Панов, Охрид и охридската област..., p. 134.

the city. Besides, they took into consideration the fact that the remaining population that was unfit for war until their return, would constantly stand here and there along the fortification walls. And so it all happened, only the totally feeble and weak remained, while those that were physically strong and in their prime, sailed with their ships to the afore-mentioned Velegiziti, who as it seems maintained peaceful relations with the population of the city.

The reges of the Dragoviti¹¹¹ tribe unanimously decided to form a military line next to the fortification walls in order to take the city, paying no attention to the weak and sparse population. Otherwise they were totally convinced by some from the same tribe of the Slavs, that they would certainly capture the city. For that reason they prepared flame-throwing weapons against the gates and some kind of devices made from interwoven sticks, ladders that reached the sky, and stone-throwers and countless wooden devices, as well as newly prepared devices for arrows; to put it simply, they were objects that no one from our generation had ever heard of or seen; we could not even imagine the names of most of them. And so, all of the Slavs of the tribe of the Rinhini, together with the Sagudati, on July 25th, the fifth indictio¹¹² ... attacked the city, some by land others by sea, with countless floating objects.

... God, who always rushes to the assistance of those that call him, appeared at once and the first of the miracles that he performed was diverting the other barbarians, that is those from the River Strimon. Since, after their arrival at a distance of three miles from our divinely protected city, according to their concluded agreement, they were made to retreat by God through the prayers of the Victor. As a result, the entire afore-mentioned tribe of the Rinhini and the remaining neighbouring tribes of barbarians, together with the Sagudati, besieged us by land and sea, surrounding the city the first day from the western up to the eastern channel and those that were more experienced in military matters observed all the places from which they believed it would be easier to take the city by siege. Also, the allied Slavs jointly investigated the shore and by the walls they dragged and installed siege equipment, which they had prepared for their destruction...

And finally when dawn broke on the third day, the whole barbarian tribe rose and shouted as one, so that the whole earth trembled and the walls shook. And, suddenly, everyone (came near) to the wall with the prepared defensive weapons, devices and fire, some by land, others lined up by the whole shore on the linked pontoons: archers,

¹¹¹ Οἱ τῶν τοῦ ἔθνους τῶν Δρογουβιτῶν ῥῆγες. This part of the text is usually interpreted as "the princes of the tribe of the Dragoviti". (Византијски извори, I, p. 204; О. В. Иванова Славяне... p. 95; Iv. Beuc, Još o problemu... p. 69.) P. Mutačiev has a different viewpoint, when he equates the reges with "kings" (П. Мутафчиев, a review of the book by F. Dvornik, La vie de Saint Grégoire le Décapolite et les Slaves Macédoniens au IX^e siècle — Paris, 1926, Македонски преглед, г. IV, кн. 2, 1928, p. 145).

¹¹² i. e. the year 677 A. D.

shield bearers, plain foot soldiers, spear carriers, those with slings and handlers of the equipment, while the bravest with ladders and fire rushed towards the wall.

And although the small gate was burned down, it remained undestroyed and the barbarians, overcome by fear, withdrew from that place. Then unseen the barbarians made sacrifices and suffered many blows and injuries not only at that place, but also through the entire land or sea. And since near the gates and by those places that to them seemed easy to conquer, they fought for three days in that manner, they bore misfortune with tears and weeping, as well as the leaders defeated by God through the Victor and the wounded by him, and arguing among themselves they returned to their lands... After several days those that were with the Velegiziti, returned with wheat and vegetables, being saved thanks to the support of the Victor, since back there they had already learned from the Slavs of the saviour of the city...

Mirac., II, 4; Tougaard, p. 148—176.

13

BYZANTIUM DECLARES WAR ON THE STRUMIANI

677—680 A. D.

From The Miracles of Saint Demetrius of Salonika, II.

But,... although the siege was broken, nevertheless the pillages had not ceased, that is, the constant daily attacks, but in the afore-mentioned manner they attacked everywhere and in every direction from ambush and they captured those who were careless.

And actually what happened (afterwards) was the greatest miracle, a miracle above all miracles. Namely, the afore-mentioned Slavs to their catastrophe ominously invented and constructed defensive weapons and devices for the attack of the city, some inventing new, unknown devices, others making swords and arrows in a new way, so that every day each aimed to acquire a better name and to appear more active than the others, with which a real competition began for affirmation before the tribal leaders.

Among them, was one from the same Slav people, experienced in conduct, action and reasoning; he was like that because they had great experience in the preparation and creation of military devices. He asked for permission and a work force from the leader himself to construct a mobile tower from well fastened logs placed on wheels and some kind of skilfully constructed rollers. He intended to cover the tower with fresh skins, to enclose it and place stone-throwers at the top and to nail sword-like parts on both sides. On the top, (there was to be) a plateau where the soldiers could move. It would consist of three floors and in it the archers and those with the sticks would be placed. And to put it simply, he wanted to build such a device with which he claimed with certainty he would conquer the city.

The afore-mentioned leaders of the Slavs were overwhelmed by the project of this strange device which I have spoken of, so behaving suspiciously towards his words, they requested that he should show the structure of the afore-mentioned device on the ground. Without hesitation the craftsman that had invented this device showed a model of the work on the ground. As I have said, convinced of the terror that would be caused, with readiness they gave him many young men, some to cut trees for the bases, others skilled and strong wood workers, yet others experienced iron blacksmiths, and heavily armed soldiers and archers. And so (in the building) of the device a large number of assistants participated.

... Finally, (with the intervention of the martyr Demetrius), the work on the very complex device was abandoned... and the siege of (the city) was lowered...

... Of all the Slavs, who from then on rested and laid down their arms¹¹³, only those from Strimon¹¹⁴ and Rinhina attacked and captured a large number of navigators who were travelling towards the capital city transporting food, as well as near the islands and the narrow sea¹¹⁵ at the points of Parion¹¹⁶ and Proconnes¹¹⁷, capturing those from the customs station¹¹⁸ with the floating objects; and so with many ships they returned home to their cottages¹¹⁹.

Then the master of state affairs, our Emperor by Christ crowned, observing the persistence and the impudence of the enemies not only against our city, but their boldness in attacking the rulers themselves, requested that his peace-loving army begin a campaign against those from Strimon through Thrace and the countries on the other side, and not in hiding or in secrecy, but notifying them in advance about the attack against the city. When they found out, they took over the gorges and the fortified places and they armed themselves for the resistance against the Romeian armies, asking for an alliance with every barbarian aid under various leaders.

But in this (case) also, as was mentioned, the powerful martyr, arming himself together with the other saints, through the victory over

¹¹³ After the unsuccessful Slav siege of Salonika in the autumn of 677 (История Византии, I, pp. 352—353) only a section of the Macedonian Slavs kept a temporary peace. This means that in this period Byzantium had not imposed stable control over the Slavs near the city of Salonika. (Б. Панов, Охрид и охридската област, pp. 134—135).

¹¹⁴ The Byzantine ships were attacked by the Strumiani, who lived by the lower course of the River Struma, around the city of Seres. (Византијски извори, I, p. 208, note 46).

¹¹⁵ Refers to the Dardanelles, the Hellespont.

¹¹⁶ Parion, a city in Asia Minor on the south-west coast of the Sea of Marmara.

¹¹⁷ Proconne, a city that was located on the island of the same name on the Sea of Marmara, i.e. the present-day island of Marmara.

¹¹⁸ The customs station that the Slavs attacked was located in Abidos or Kisik (О. В. Иванова, Славяне..., p. 106, note 40).

¹¹⁹ The author scornfully calls the Slav cottages ἐπὶ θυλάκους which in translation means sack. (Византијски извори, I, p. 210 note 51).

the Slavs raised the Romeian army, killing them in their own ambushes, their brave leaders and hopliti¹²⁰. And the entire barbarian tribe fled away, so that some of them, who had secretly entered our holy protected city, were induced to go to their cottages, where they had left their families behind, so they could collect food, which had been left behind due to the indescribable fear and the slaughter that had taken place among them. And the defeated and the fugitive inhabitants could be seen, together with the women and children in the cottages surrounding the city and the remaining places nearby, carrying on their shoulders wheat, vegetables and other household goods and all that was necessary for flight; and they were unarmed and only half-dressed, as usually occurs during travel and heat... At last the barbarians compelled by the final hopelessness, spoke of peace.

Mirac., II, 4; *Tougard*, p. 178—180.

14

THE EMPEROR JUSTINIAN II ATTACKS THE SCLAVINII
AROUND SALONIKA AND TRANSFERS A LARGE NUMBER
OF SLAVS TO ASIA MINOR

688—689 A. D.

From the Chronographia by Theophanes the Confessor

He¹²¹ broke the peace concluded with the Bulgarians, rejecting the fixed agreements made by his own father, and commanded cavalry units to enter Thrace, with the aim of enslaving the Bulgarians and the Sclavinii...¹²²

That year¹²³ Justinian went to war against Sclavinia and Bulgaria¹²⁴. He repulsed the Bulgarians that intercepted him and after carrying out an attack up to Salonika, a majority of the Slavs joined him, some by war and others because he won them over and settled them in the regions of Opsikion¹²⁵, transferring them through Abidos¹²⁶.

Theoph., I, p. 364, 5—18.

¹²⁰ ὀπλίτας — heavily armed foot soldiers.

¹²¹ i. e. the Emperor Justinian II (685—695).

¹²² Βουλόμενος τοὺς τε Βουλγάρους καὶ τὰς Σκλαυινίας αἰχμαλωτίσαι. Iv. Duichev rightly interprets the term Σκλαυινίας as a naming of the independent Slav princedoms, which were located in the southern parts of the Balkan peninsula, outside the borders of the Bulgarian state (Ив. Дуйчев, Славяни и Първобългари, p. 196 et seq.).

¹²³ The campaign was carried out in the year of 688/9. (Г. Острогорски, Историја Византије, p. 114; Е. Э. Липшиц, Очерки..., p. 34).

¹²⁴ Κατὰ Σκλαυινίας καὶ Βουλγαρίας Here Theophanes clearly differentiates Bulgaria from Sclavinia, i. e. the Slav land" that was not subject either to Bulgaria or Byzantium. See Ив. Дуйчев, Славяни и Първобългари, pp. 197—198.

¹²⁵ Opsikion was one of the first Byzantine themes that were created in Asia Minor in the 7th century. (Д. Ангелов, История на Византия, I, Sofia, 1965, p. 239).

¹²⁶ Abidos, a city in Asia Minor on the passage from Europe into Asia.

JUSTINIAN II SUBJUGATES SLAV TRIBES AROUND SALONIKA 688—689 A. D.

*From the History of the Patriarch Nicephorus*¹²⁷

Justinian¹²⁸, having come to power, up turned all that his father had told him concerning the peace and the remaining political order. In conformity with that, he broke off the peace concluded with the Bulgarians, and after having led the cavalry towards the thracian regions, he attacked the Slavs at once. He went all the way down to the city of Salonika, and there he subjugated many Slav tribes, some by war, others by an agreement for surrender and he settled them in the region of Opsikion, taking them through Abidos. From them he gathered an army of thirty thousand men, armed them and called them a "reserve army"¹²⁹. At the head of the army he appointed the army leader Nebul, one of the nobility...

Nicephori archiepiscopi Konstantinopolitani opuscula historica. Ed. C. de Boor. Lipsiae 1880, p. 36, 13—38, 8.

ON THE CAMPAIGN OF JUSTINIAN II AGAINST SCLAVINIA 688—689 A. D.

From the Chronographia Tripartita by Anastasius Bibliothecarius

Justinian broke the peace, concluded with the Bulgarians, violating the order that had been established, as was mentioned, by his own father, and ordered the cavalry to pass into Thrace, for he wished to plunder both the Bulgarians and the Sclavinii.

In the third year of his reign¹³⁰, Justinian raised the army against Sclavinia and Bulgaria. He pushed back the Bulgarians, who resisted

¹²⁷ Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople (806—815), wrote many works. His Short History of the Reign of Mavricius, which is also called Breviarium Nicephori, is of the most importance for macedonian and general Balkan history. In this work by Nicephorus events from 602 to 769 are encompassed. Nicephorus included significant authentic data about the Sclavinii in Macedonia; in many ways they confirm similar data from Theophanes' Chronographia. We give some extracts from this work by Nicephorus.

¹²⁸ Justinian II.

¹²⁹ This Slav army was used on the battlefield in Armenia (Г. Острогорски, Историја Византије, p. 145).

¹³⁰ i. e. the year of 688.

him at that moment, and the numerous Slavs, making them retreat up to Salonika; he won over some of them by war and others because they joined him, and he settled them on the territory of Opsikion, having transferred them across the sea through Abidos. But on his return, he was held back on the road in the gorge¹³¹, and he barely managed to return, because many of his army were killed and wounded.

Anast. Bibliothec. 231, p. 8—23.

17

CONSTANTINE V ATTACKS AND PLUNDERS THE SCLAVINII
IN MACEDONIA

758—759 A. D.

From the Chronographia of Theophanes the Confessor

That year¹³² Constantine¹³³ plundered the Sclavinii throughout Macedonia¹³⁴, and subjugated the rest.

Theoph., I, p. 430, 21—22.

¹³¹ Most probably the gorge extending between the city of Kavalla and the mouth of the River Mesta, on the road from Salonika to Constantinople. (П. Мутафчиев, Старият друм през „Траянова врата“. — Списание на БАН, LV, Sofia, 1937, p. 83) .

¹³² i. e. the year of 758.

¹³³ Constantine V Copronim, Byzantin emperor (741—775).

¹³⁴ Τὰς κατὰ τὴν Μακεδονίαν Σκλαυινίας. Here Theophanes clearly distinguishes the Bulgaria and Bulgaria from the Slavs and the Slav princedoms, the Slav land, the Sclavinii and Sclavinia. This is also concluded with certainty by Iv. Dujčev, who anticipates that “under the first definition he (Theophanes) certainly means the subjects of the Bulgarian state, and under the Slavs — those Slav tribes that were not yet subdued either to the Bulgarian state, or to the Byzantine Empire. In other words, they were the independent Slav princedoms in the Macedonian and the Thracian lands, even those that were south of the regions of the ancient Hellada“. (Ив. Дуйчев, Славяни и първобългари, p. 198). Moreover, this is the first connection of the word “Sclavinii” with Macedonia after the Slav colonization of this country. Until then usually the Byzantine and other authors used the names: “Slav tribes”, “Slav people”, “Sclavinii” etc., always separating the Bulgarians from the other Slav tribes on the Balkans. See S. Antoljak, Makedonija u 9. stoljeću, — 36. Кирил Солунски, I Изд. на МАНУ, Skopje, 1970, p. 40. By the same author, „Македонија“ и „Македонците“ во средниот век. — Гласник на ИНИ, г. XVI, 1 (1972), p. 111 et seq.; Б. Панов, За етногенезата на македонскиот народ, p. 84.

ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN OF CONSTANTINE V AGAINST THE MACEDONIAN SCLAVINII

758—759 A. D.

From the Chronographia Tripartita by Anastasius Bibliothecarius

In the eighteenth year of his reign¹³⁵, Constantine¹³⁶ enslaved the Sclavinii of Macedonia¹³⁷ and he subjugated the rest.

Anast. Bibliothec., p. 282, 20—21.

CONSTANTINE V PREVENTS THE BULGARIAN KHAN THELERIG FROM ATTACKING THE SCLAVINIA "BERSITIA" IN MACEDONIA

773 A. D.

From the Chronographia by Theophanes the Confessor

In the month of October, the eleventh indictio¹³⁸, the Emperor¹³⁹ received the news from his friends in hiding¹⁴⁰, that the Bulgarian

¹³⁵ i. e. the year of 758.

¹³⁶ The Emperor Constantine V Copronim.

¹³⁷ Sclavenians penes Macedoniam. In Macedonia only the Slavs around Salonika were affected by this campaign of Constantine V and Byzantium was only successful in imposing its power temporarily. The Macedonian Sclavinii from the provinces continued to be governed by their tribal leaders, i. e. by their "princes" and "kings" (ἀρχοντες, ἡγῆτες) on account of which Byzantium was forced to be at war with them (P. Mutačiev, a review on the book by F. Dvornik, "La vie de Saint Grégoire le Décapolite et les Slaves Macédoniens au IX^e siècle", Македонски преглед, IV/2, 1928, p. 145). C. Lišev even believes that in the 8th century the "Macedonian Sclavinii" had gone into semi-state formations (C. Лишев, За генезиса на феодализма в България, Sofia, 1963, p. 119 et seq.; cf. also Б. Панов, Охрид и охридската област, p. 135).

¹³⁸ The 12th indictio should stand here, in place of the 11th indictio, because an obvious error was made in the text. See Византијски извори, I, p. 233, note 56.

¹³⁹ Constantine V Copronim.

¹⁴⁰ V. N. Zlatarski believes that the Byzantine emperor was informed about this by some dissatisfied Slavs. (Б. Н. Златарски, История на българската държава през средните векове, I/1, Sofia, 1918, p. 231. The khan Thelerig succeeded in capturing and liquidating a large number of these Byzantine agents. (История Византии, 2, Moscow, 1967, pp. 57—58)

master¹⁴¹ was sending twelve thousand soldiers and boili¹⁴² to capture Bersitia¹⁴³ and to move them¹⁴⁴ (the Bersitians) into Bulgaria.

Theoph. I. p. 447, 10—13.

20

ABOUT THE SLAV POPULATION OF MACEDONIA

8th century

From Strabonos Epithomatus¹⁴⁵

And now¹⁴⁶, in that way almost all of Epirus, Hellada, the Peloponnese and Macedonia have also been settled by the Skiti-Slavs¹⁴⁷.

C. Müller, Geographi graeci minores. Paris 1882, p. 574.

21

THE LOGOTHETUS STAVRICIUS ATTACKS THE SLAV TRIBES
AROUND SALONIKA

783 A. D.

From the Chronographia by Theophanes the Confessor

That year¹⁴⁸ when Irene¹⁴⁹ made peace with the Arabs, finding the right opportunity, she sent Stavricius, the patrician and logothetus.

¹⁴¹ The khan Thelerig (768—777).

¹⁴² Refers to the boliars (nobility).

¹⁴³ Βερζητίαν. Here "Bersitia" designates the territory of the Slav tribe of Bersiti (Βερζήται), that extended between the present day cities of Kavadarci, Titov Veles, Bitola, Kičevo, Debar and Ohrid, also including Prespa; it consisted of one separate Sclavinia. See. Ив. Снегаров, Град Охрид, Македонски прглед, IV/I, 1928, p. 99. Б. Панов, Охрид и охридската област, pp. 122—123 et seq..

¹⁴⁴ This unfulfilled campaign of the khan Thelerig towards the Sciavinia "Bersitia" aimed at taking as much as possible of the population of this Macedonian territory, for it seems Bulgaria in this period was fairly reduced due to the constant wars with Byzantium. (S. Runciman, A History of the First Bulgarian Empire, London, 1930, p. 41 cf. also Византијски извори, I, p. 233,

¹⁴⁵ The writer called Strabonos Epithomatus, who most probably lived in the second half of the 10th century, took several excerpts from the Strabonos Geographia. Of great importance to Macedonian history are the data about the Slavs settled in Macedonia.

¹⁴⁶ Most likely this refers to the 8th century. (Византијски извори, I p. 294).

¹⁴⁷ Σκῦθαι Σκλάβοι νέμονται. because the Byzantine authors often designate the Slavs as "Skiti". See P. A. Наследова, Иоанн Камениата, pp. 220—221.

¹⁴⁸ i. e. the year of 782.

¹⁴⁹ Irene, Byzantine empress (797—802).

away on a fast dromon¹⁵⁰ against the Slav tribes with a large army. When he reached Salonika and Hellada¹⁵¹, he subjugated them all and made them subject to the Empire¹⁵². He also entered the Peloponnese¹⁵³ and brought back many prisoners and booty to the Empire of the Romans.

That year¹⁵⁴, in the month of January, in the seventh indictio, the above-mentioned Stavricius returned from the Slavs and triumphantly celebrated the victory in the hippodrome.

Theoph., I, p. 25—457, 11.

22

THE PRINCE OF THE VELEGIZITI AKAMIR PARTICIPATES
IN THE CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE EMPRESS IRENE

799 A. D.

From the Chronographia of Theophanes the Confessor

In the month of March, the seventh indictio¹⁵⁵, Akamir, archon of the Slavs of Velezitia¹⁵⁶, induced by the Helladians¹⁵⁷, desired to lead the sons of Constantine¹⁵⁸, and from them to assign an emperor. When the Empress Irene learned of this, she sent off to the Patricius Con-

¹⁵⁰ Refers to the war ships that could carry up to 200 men (О. В. Иванова, *Славяне*, p. 130, note 13). Furthermore, the title "logathetus on the dromon" carried the responsibility of maintenance of the roads on which the imperial subjects and foreign emissaries travelled and state mail was carried. (Д. Ангелов, *История на Византия*, II, Sofia, 1963, pp. 39—40).

¹⁵¹ Hellada included the central Greek regions of Attica and Boeotia. Byzantium established lasting and stable authority there at the end of the 7th century, i.e. it formed a theme (Г. Острогорски, *Постанак теме Хеллада и Пелопонез*, — *Зборник Радова Византолошког Института САН*, Belgrade, 1951, 2, p. 64).

¹⁵² Stavricius only succeeded in imposing supreme Byzantine power over the Slavs around Salonika. Here Byzantium established a more permanent and stable power at the beginning of the 9th century, when it formed the Salonika theme. (Г. Острогорски, *Историја Византије*, p. 199, note 3).

¹⁵³ According to the information given by Constantine Porphyrogenitus, the Peloponnese was totally Slavinized in the course of the 8th century. (Византијски извори за Историју народа Југославије, II, Belgrade, 1959 p. 75, note 279). Here the Slavs retained their independence to the end of the 8th century, when Byzantium succeeded in forming the Peloponnese theme. (Г. Острогорски, *Постанак теме Хеллада и Пелопонез*, p. 64).

¹⁵⁴ i.e. the year of 784.

¹⁵⁵ i.e. the year of 799.

¹⁵⁶ Βελέζιτιας. Belzitae (Anast. Bibliothec, 315). Here the term "Velezitia" refers of the territory of the Slav tribe Velegziti. (Византијски извори, I, p. 235, note 65; Г. Острогорски, *Историја Византије*, p. 197).

¹⁵⁷ Refers to the inhabitants of Central Greece. (S. Antoljak, *Die Makedonischen Sklavinien, La Macédoine et les Macedoniens dans le passé*, Институт на народна историја, Скопје, 1970, p. 38).

¹⁵⁸ Constantine V Copronim.

stantine Serantapeh his son Theophylactus, who was a spatarian¹⁵⁹, and her grandson; then she blinded them all and destroyed their plot against her.

Theoph., I, p. 473, 32—474, 1.

23

THE EMPEROR NICEPHORUS I GENICUS MAKES HIS ASIA MINOR
SUBJECTS COLONIZE AMONG THE SCLAVINII

809—810 A. D.

From the Chronographia of Theophanes the Confessor

The same year¹⁶⁰, when the soldiers' pay was divided in Strimon¹⁶¹, the Bulgarians attacked and robbed 1,100 containers of gold, after which they slaughtered many men together with the army leader and the archons and there were many army archons in the other themes. All of them were killed there.

That year¹⁶², Nicephorus¹⁶³, after his godless acts with the aim of making the army totally obedient, ordered the Christians to be expelled from all the themes¹⁶⁴ (and to colonize) among the Sclavinii¹⁶⁵, and to have all their properties sold. That was tantamount to enslavement, so that many in a hysterical state cursed, and sought for a solution as enemies, while others wept over the graves of their parents, and regarded the dead as fortunate. Some of them used a rope to free themselves from the terrors. Since they could not carry their property with them, they watched how their property, earned by the labour of their forefathers, collapsed. All of them were overcome with despair.

Theoph., I. p. 484—485, 10—14.

¹⁵⁹ Spatarian — an honorary title granted to people that served in the court — to eunuchs, etc.

¹⁶⁰ i. e. the year of 809.

¹⁶¹ Here Strimon refers to the region of Struma, which was under supreme Byzantine power; even in the second half of the 9th century, the "Strimon theme" was established. See M. Рајковић, Област Стримона и тема Стримон. — Зборник Радова Византолошког института САН, Belgrade, 1958, p. 4 et seq.; Б. Панов, Општествено-политичките прилики во Струмичката област од крајот на VI до почетокот на X век. — Гласник на ИНИ, г. V/2, 1961, p. 224.

¹⁶² i. e. the year of 809.

¹⁶³ Nicephorus I Genicus, Byzantine emperor (802—811).

¹⁶⁴ Refers to the Asia Minor themes.

¹⁶⁵ The Asia Minor "Christians", i. e. colonizers (stratiotai), were settled on the Balkans in the period from September 809 to Easter 810 A. D. (J. B. Bury, България през IX века и покръщането на славяните и българите. — Известия на Историческото дружество в София, кн. IV, Sofia, 1915, p. 16. Mostly they were settled in the Macedonian regions threatened by the Bulgarians, i. e. in the defensive perimeter that extended between the Rivers Struma and Vardar. (В. Н. Златарски, История на българската държава през средните векове, Т. I 4. 2; Sofia, 1927, p. 236; Б. Панов, Општествено-политичките прилики во Струмичката област, p. 223.).

THE KHAN KRUM TAKES ON A CAMPAIGN AGAINST MACEDONIA

812 A. D.

From the Chronographia by Theophanes the Confessor

When Krum¹⁶⁶, the leader of the Bulgarians, captured Develt by siege... (the Byzantine) armies... began a rebellion against the Emperor...¹⁶⁷. The Bulgarians having learned (of this)... took over a large part of Thrace and Macedonia; then the Christians¹⁶⁸, without being pursued by anyone, fled, abandoning Anchial, Nicaea, the fortress Provat and some other fortified places, such as Philipopolis and Philippi¹⁶⁹.

Those that had settled Strimon as immigrants, taking advantage of the situation, fled and returned to their homes. It was divine punishment that transformed the foolishness of Nicephorus, on account of which his imagined success, of which he boasted, failed so quickly¹⁷⁰.

Theoph., I, p. 495—496.

THE SLAV BARGES ATTACK THE BYZANTINE SHIPS

C. 813—821 A. D.

From the Hagiography of Gregorius Decapolitus¹⁷¹

(Saint Gregorius)¹⁷²... From Enos¹⁷³ embarked on board a ship and arrived in Christopolis¹⁷⁴. After he had come off the ship started

¹⁶⁶ Khan Krum, Bulgarian ruler, (803—814).

¹⁶⁷ Michael I Rangabe (811—813).

¹⁶⁸ Refers to the Asia Minor colonists — stratiotai.

¹⁶⁹ The city of Philippi was located between Drama and Kavalla, to which the existing remains bear evidence. (Гръцки извори, III, p. 284, note 1).

¹⁷⁰ Due to the Bulgarian offensive in the year of 812, the Byzantine colonists in a state of panic abandoned their properties among the Sclavinii. After committing devastation and plunder the Bulgarian armies returned to their country. М. Рајковић, Област Стримона., p. 5; Б. Панов, Општествено-политичките прилики во Струмичката област., p. 224, & note 123).

¹⁷¹ The hagiography of Gregorius Decapolit as was written by the deacon Ignatius, a contemporary of Gregorius. He lived in the last decades of the 8th century and the first half of the 9th century. From this hagiography, which contains short and very significant authentic data concerning Slavo-Byzantine relations in the first half of the 9th century, the parts that speak of the pirate attacks of the Slavs from the lower Struma, as well as of the great Slav rebellion near Salonika against Byzantium have been selected and presented.

¹⁷² Gregorius, whose death is dated in 842 (Византијски извори, I p. 254, note 1) as an adversary of the Iconoclasts was persecuted by the Emperor Leo V (813—820). He even abandoned Asia Minor and came to the Balkans to fight for the true faith. (F. Dvornik, *La vie...*, pp. 26—27).

¹⁷³ Enos, a city that was located at the mouth of the River Mesta.

¹⁷⁴ Christopolis, present-day Kavalla.

along the river,¹⁷⁵ he fell among the Slav pirates who sailed in barges by the steep banks of the river and plundered the ships that arrived in the harbour...¹⁷⁶

F. Dvornik, *La vie de Saint Grégoire le D capolite et les Slaves Mac doniens au IX  si cle*. Paris 1926, p. 54, 23—26.

26

THE PARTICIPATION OF THE MACEDONIAN SLAVS
IN THE REBELLION OF THOMAS THE SLAV

821—823 A. D.

*From the letter of Michael II to the honorable Ludwig*¹⁷⁷

(Thomas)¹⁷⁸... having gathered our barges and dromons, had the opportunity to arrive in (some) parts of Thrace and Macedonia. Arriving so rapidly, he besieged our city¹⁷⁹, and surrounded it with the fleet in the month of December, the 15th indictio¹⁸⁰. Although there was a small number of soldiers and warriors with us, we never missed a chance of encountering them in battle and driving them out of the city. But

¹⁷⁵ Refers to the Struma which was navigable along its lower course. Gregorius was probably attacked by the Strumiani near the mouth of this river. (F. Dvornik, *La vie...*, p. 31 sq.). According to P. Lemerle, only a small and narrow part of the bank was then under Byzantine rule. (P. Lemerle, *Philippe...*, p. 132). Furthermore, the Strumiani in this period were one of the most dangerous Slav tribes for Byzantium. (Ch. Gerard, *Les Bulgares de la Volga et les Slaves du Danube*, Paris 1939, pp. 133—134).

¹⁷⁶ This event probably occurred during the period of the rebellion of Thomas the Slav, when the rebellion threatened to spread towards Struma and when the Emperor Michael II (820—829), was helpless in strengthening the ties of Byzantium with the Strumiani (P. Mufta iev, review on the book by F. Dvornik, *La vie...*, p. 146.; Б. Панов, *Дејноста на Кирил и Методија во Македонија*, — 36. Кирил Солунски, I, МАНУ, Скопје, 1970, p. 168).

¹⁷⁷ The Emperor Michael II, sent this letter to the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Ludwig the Honourable on April 10th, 824. With it he informed him of all the significant events in Byzantium, involving events that occurred before the year of 824. The extracts that are presented here from the letter of Michael II, speak of the participation of the Macedonian Slavs in the rebellion of Thomas the Slav.

¹⁷⁸ Thomas, the leader of the rebellion from 821—823 raised against the rule of the Emperor Michael II, was according to Joseph Genesius by descent an Armenian and Scythian, (Genesius, rec. C. Lachmann, Bonn e 1834, pp. 8, 15—16, 32, 8—12); according to the Continuer of Theophanes, he was a Slav ("Theophanes Continuatus, rec. J. Bekker, Bonn e 1838, I, pp. 50 18—21), and according to Pseudo-Simeon he was a Romeian. ("Theophanes Continuatus Ioannes Cameniata, Symeon magister, Georgius monachus", rec. J. Bekker, Bonn e 1838, p. 621). The most acceptable viewpoint is that of those research workers who assume that Thomas was a Slav by descent. For more details see М. Рајковић, *О пореклу Томе, вође устанка 812—823 г.* — *Зборник Радова Византолошког Института*, САН 2, Belgrade, 1953, pp. 33—38.

¹⁷⁹ i. e. Constantinople.

¹⁸⁰ The siege of Constantinople began in December in the year of 821. See Е. Э. Липшиц, *Очерки истории византийского общества и культуры*, p. 220.

since, as was already mentioned, he had a mighty enemy power, and not only from the above-mentioned regions, but also from of Asia, Europe¹⁸¹, Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaly and from the surrounding Sclavinii¹⁸². For this reason our siege continued during the course of one whole year, sometimes from close to, sometimes farther away¹⁸³.

Mansi, Michaelis Belbi et Theophili impp. Constantinop. epistola De non adorandis imaginibus ad Ludovicum Pium imp. Romanorum de anno DCCCXXIV. Nova et amplissima collectio conciliorum XIV. Florentiae 1759, col. 418, B—D.

¹⁸¹ Here Europe refers to Byzantium's Balkan possessions.

¹⁸² Refers to the Macedonian Sclavinii. See Е. Э. Липшиц, Очерки истории..., p. 219. S. Antoljak, Makedonia u 9 stoljeću, p. 29.

¹⁸³ Thomas held Constantinople under siege until March of April 823, when the Emperor Michael II, assisted by the Bulgarian Khan Omortag, destroyed his army and by the end of the year 823 liquidated his rebellion. See Е. Э. Липшиц, Очерки истории, p. 223; и П. Петров, Бунтъг на Тома Славянина и намесата на Българския хан Омуртаг. — Исторически преглед, г. XXV, бр. 5, 1969, pp. 68—76.